

Found by peachyfruit

Series: Amanecer [1]

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Gen, I want to expand on Kali a bit more, Introspection, Missing Children, Trauma, there really needs to be more on her

Language: English

Characters: Kali Prasad

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Summary:

She breathes deeply to quiet her heart and attempts to reign in her growing body; she is like Alice, whose body enlarges to fill an empty house. But she thinks of her empty coffin, or whatever it was they buried her in. She thinks about the blank documents held in some laboratory, that make no mention of her name. She thinks of the way she doesn't exist, the way her body has not merely died but disappeared. -- A short, introspective piece on Kali Prasad and body.

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Author's Note:

I posted this up on Tumblr ages ago, when I was still slightly active (and even then, it was mostly with bloggers who wrote on Kali and Nancy). I have some other work on Kali, an arc that centers around Kali, and has a lot of Kali/Steve. But I hoping this posting will kickstart me to finish those other pieces. Thank you for reading.

She never asked Jane to look up her parents and, to be fair, Jane never offered. But not even Mick knew about the blurry, printed out news article that Kali kept close to her. She almost hated it, the desperation in her mother's face and the sleepless look in her father's eyes. She doesn't remember them too much beyond the sparse moments of tenderness that Kali assumes she has embellished to make up for the wide gaps of memories. She also remembers moments of crying, for some toy or another, and she hates herself for screaming at them. But the most concrete image of them is from this article, whose condescending note is half racist and half disbelief that western governments would ever kidnap children.

She knows that if she showed Jane the picture, she wouldn't even ask who they were; Jane would know and would probably hold her hand for a bit before placing herself in front of the television. But whatever lies behind the curtain, the mundane and the typical, would cut her more than that photo. Kali once read a book on the aftermath of the death of one's child. Mostly because it was nonchalantly left on the reading table, the one the mother (in that family she had once had) read for her work as a therapist. Kali was young, 14 or so, and there was a chapter on kidnapped children. The authors likened a missing child to a body never found, infinitely more traumatic for the parents. They mentioned that unlike childhood disease and accidents, the pain was more residual, more haunting. They suggested that there be a funeral, an empty casket covered by dirt so as to have a tangible place even without a tangible body. (The author's footnote addressed the differences in cultural burial ceremonies and suggested

one work within one's traditions). Kali was only a little confused then or, maybe, she was a bit shortsighted. She imagined having a place to lay flowers would ease the pain. But she knows now, that the casket, swallowed up by the ground, was anything but empty. It was full of memory and raw emotion, the one found deep in your belly that doesn't speak in words.

But it was the conclusion that Kali read that really pinned her heart and swelled up her throat. The conclusion that reassured parents their ability to sleep and breath in due time. That they would learn to love and trust, again. That they would find moments of happiness with their other children; that they could have more children without the feeling of abandoning or forgetting this lost child. That moments of sadness would never leave but that happiness would return. And she imagines her mother going to the market for that day's dinner, some dish she hasn't eaten in more than ten years. That despite Chicago having a couple of well-known Indian restaurants, she's not exactly sure which region her family is from (she isn't sure how she would react at expecting the same dim and distant taste, only to be disappointed). She imagines her father reading whatever silly news to no one in particular, his voice scratchier yet gentler with age. She doesn't know if she'd be happy or upset if they got through the day without her, if they went hours without a glassy eyed look. But she knows she couldn't bear to see them cry and pray for her.

She sits quietly in her makeshift room in a new warehouse, it's emptiness reverberating on her skin. Mick, Funshine, Dottie, Axel, they'll be back soon from whichever pizza joint they decided upon. But the air feels tight and her body seems to be bursting beyond the large space of the warehouse. She breathes deeply to quiet her heart and attempts to reign in her growing body; she is like Alice, whose body enlarges to fill an empty house. But she thinks of her empty coffin, or whatever it was they buried her in. She thinks about the blank documents held in some laboratory, that make no mention of her name. She thinks of the way she doesn't exist, the way her body has not merely died but disappeared. She lets her breath quicken, lets her skin feel stretched, and for her heart to enlarge to the size of her room. She is tangible, she is not lost, she has not been eaten up by the ground or bureaucracy. Kali is real, her body found, and her touch, tender.